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A Man Just Like Other Men? Masculinity and Clergy in Spain during Late Francoism (1960–1975)

While the notion of masculinity has been incorporated by European and North American research into the field of study of religious history, in Spain its introduction is still in its infancy. This article reflects on the contribution of religious discourses and the experiences of male clergy to the construction of different identity models of masculinity within a very plural Catholicism, at a time of social mobilisation, political transition, sexual liberation, and religious secularisation. These changes questioned the Catholic masculine ideal of the first decades of Franco dictatorship (1939–1975) to propose new profiles of the virile religious archetype. The article states that the crisis of the priest, which is part of the religious crisis of the 1960s, can be interpreted as a struggle between different models of Catholic masculinity. At the same time, this crisis regarding the figure of the priest influenced religious, social, and political changes in Spain.

Introduction: Masculinity, Religion, and Priesthood

This text explores the relationship between Catholicism and the ideals of masculinity in order to reflect on how a Catholic man defined himself in the 1960s and the early 1970s in Spain. At that time, the Catholic cultures that were spreading were new compared to the previous stage of national-Catholicism, which had been characterised by a close collaboration between the Franco dictatorship and the church. One of these new cultures was based on a new vision outlined in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), and another constituted a (not so) new fundamentalism, which distanced itself from the conciliar position of the Holy See and remained faithful to the Franco regime.[1] Although this article is based on a broad

[1]. To explore the evolution and the internal differences of the Spanish church, see V. J. Díaz Burillo, *Las transiciones de la Iglesia (1962–1987). Del repliegue a la revanche* (Granada: Comares, 2019) and W. J. Callahan, "The Spanish Church: Change and Continuity," in *Spain Transformed: The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959–1975*, ed. Nigel Townson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 182–94.

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concept of the church — which includes clergy and laity, men and women — I will focus on the figure of the priest as a sexed man who represented a masculine stereotype, an ideal that faced a crisis at this time of profound transformations in the Catholic world. This will allow me, on the one hand, to observe how gender contributed to shaping religious identities and, on the other, how the changes in Catholicism influenced gender identities, especially in the case of masculinity.[2]

Analysing the crisis of the priest from a gender perspective helps to understand the scope of the religious crisis of the 1960s and early 1970s, which in Spain not only had greater religious and social repercussions than in other neighbouring Catholic countries, but also some political consequences due to the profound social control exercised by the Catholic Church and its close relationship with the Franco dictatorship. The appearance of new models of priestly masculinity had three main consequences. First, it caused tensions in the clergy and confusion among the faithful, but also a certain renewal of a church that in the 1940s and 1950s had been characterised by triumphalism, isolation of the modernising currents of Catholicism, and the uncontested predominance of the male clergy. Second, it influenced the rapid modernisation of Spanish society, by contributing to the diffusion of ideals regarding Catholic masculinity that made possible less-hierarchical relationships between women and men, and plural ways of understanding religion. Third, to a certain extent, it could be understood as a factor which contributed to the delegitimisation of the Franco regime, by questioning the authoritarian virile archetype promoted by the dictatorship and by helping to disseminate democratic values (autonomy, dialogue, solidarity, defence of human rights).

The development of studies on religion and gender in contemporary Spain has yielded significant knowledge about the evolution of discourses around Catholic femininity, and the active agenda of Catholic women.[3] However, the notion of masculinity has only recently been incorporated into current research on Spanish Catholicism despite the fact that historiographic interest has traditionally been focused on activities and proposals led by men.[4] Often and until recently, Catholic men have been viewed as Catholics and not as men.[5] I am interested in the masculine ideals of the Catholic priests in the 1960s and the early 1970s in Spain, their adjustment to the qualities and virtues that were attributed to masculinity, and their insertion in the

2. As noted by M. Bréjon de Lavergnée and M. Della Sudda, "Une histoire religieuse sans genre est-elle (encore) posible?," in *Genre et Christianisme. Plaidoyers pour une histoire croisée*, ed. M. Bréjon de Lavergnée and M. Della Sudda (Paris: Beauchesne, 2014), 9–28.
3. I. Blasco, "Religión, género y mujeres en la historia contemporánea de España: un balance historiográfico," in *La historia religiosa de la España contemporánea: balance y perspectivas*, ed. F. Monter, J. de la Cueva, and J. Louzao (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá, 2017), 25777.
4. D. Menozzi, et al., "Investigaciones históricas e historia de la religión," *Ayer* 116 (2019): 327–56.
5. C. Muller and A. Favier, "Les Hommes catholiques, un point aveugle des études de genre? Réflexions sur l'étude des masculinités en contexte catholique (France, XIXe-XXe)," Communication presented in the Colloquium *Histoire des femmes, histoire du genre, histoire genrée*, 2013. Retrieved from http://consciences.hypotheses.org/530.

transformations that Catholicism and society experienced in the last decades of Francoism.

My research is framed in different debates raised in studies on gender and religion. One of them states the possible existence of a feminisation and (re) masculinisation of religion in modern times. According to the thesis of the feminisation of religion, throughout the nineteenth century the religious world was connected to femininity, while rejection or indifference to religion became elements of bourgeois and working-class masculinity.[6] Critical responses to this approach have pointed out that the secular clergy continued to be male, and many men continued to be linked to religion.[7] There have been different interpretations of the religious mobilisation of secular men in contemporary Europe. On some occasions, it has been described as a remasculinisation, understood as a project that sought to attract men to churches in response to the perception that religion had been feminised.[8] Other authors have stated that this appeal to men was made in a complementary and differentiated way from appeals to women, but without implying a negative assessment of the symbolic feminisation of religion or women's activism.[9] Concerning Spanish Catholicism, I hold that representations, initiatives and actions by women and men were at times considered as confrontational and at others as complementary. The figure of the priest remained unquestioned inside the Catholic Church until the second half of the twentieth century; from then on, different interpretations of masculinity and clergy developed, regarding their relationship with the role of women and men in the church.

A second debate which is significant for this analysis concerns the coexistence of masculine and feminine ideals in religious spaces, not always in dichotomous terms.[10] In this sense, it should be remembered that there was not such a rigid separation between the masculine and the feminine as usually assumed, since, for example, masculine virtues were appealed to mobilise women and the expression of religious emotions by men was allowed.[11] Such circumstance is clearly observed in the case of the clergy, in which

6. C. G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularization 1800–2000* (London: Routledge, 2001). H. McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848–1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).
7. R. Mínguez Blasco, "¿Dios cambió de sexo? El debate internacional sobre la feminización de la religión y algunas reflexiones para la España decimonónica," *Historia Contemporánea* 51 (2015): 397–426.
8. Y. M. Werner, "Religious feminization, confessionalism and re-masculinisation in Western European society, 1800–1960," in *Pieties and Gender*, ed. L. Sjorup and H. R. Christensen (Boston: Leiden, 2009), 143–66.
9. T. van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex: Catholic Constructions of Masculinity and Femininity in Belgium, c.1800–1940* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013). I. Blasco Herranz, "¿Re-masculinización del catolicismo? Género, religión e identidad católica masculina en España a comienzos del siglo XX," in *Mujeres, hombres y catolicismo en la España contemporánea. Nuevas visiones desde la historia*, ed. I. Blasco (Valencia: Tirant, 2018), 115–36.
10. P. Pasture, "Beyond the feminization thesis. Gendering the History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Beyond the Feminization Thesis and Gender Christianity in Modern Europe*, ed. P. Pasture, J. Art, and T. Buerman (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012), 32–33.
11. Van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*.

qualities typical of masculinity (self-discipline, strength) are combined with others which could be read as Christian expressions usually associated with femininity (humility, piety, obedience, love, chastity).[12] In this sense, from Protestant or anticlerical positions, in the contemporary Western world, the Catholic priest could be represented as effeminate, as uncontrollably masculine due to his supposed lust, or as neutral.[13] These images were contested by Catholicism itself, but it is true that celibacy meant that the Catholic priest embodied a different masculinity, which according to Hoegaerts does not fully conform to hegemonic masculinity but cannot be considered anti-hegemonic either.[14]

The few studies that focus on masculinity and the Spanish clergy, beyond the caricatural image that came from anticlericalism, show that the ideal defended by the church was oriented to a reaffirmation of masculine character and authority around values such as discipline, self-control, and chastity, a sign of virility and moral superiority over the laity, although it did not exclude other virtues considered feminine such as patience and obedience.[15] However, in the 1960s a new stage opened up in international Catholicism.[16] It was a time of profound social change known as "religious crisis" that pointed to a growing secularisation of customs, the incorporation of women into the world of work, the irruption of a rebellious youth that questioned the values of their elders, and the diffusion of the ideas of the Second Vatican Council.[17] These changes affected the concept of masculinity of lay

12. As stated by Y. M. Werner, "Alternative masculinity? Catholic Missionaries in Scandinavia", in *Christian Masculinity: Men and Religion in Northern Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Y. M. Werner (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2011), 165–87.

13. P. Airiau, "Le prêtre catholique: masculin, neutre, autre? Des débuts du XIXe siècle au milieu du XXe siècle," in *Hommes et masculinités de 1789 à nos jours*, ed. R. Revenin (Paris: Autrement, 2007), 192–207; T. Verhoeven, *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism: France and the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

14. J. Hoegaerts, "Soldats dévots et saints combatifs. Regards sur l'historiographie anglophone et germanophone des masculinités religieuses (XIXe–XXe siècle)," in Bréjon de Lavergnée and Della Sudda, *Genre et Christianisme*, 77–78.

15. R. Mínguez-Blasco, "Between Virgins and Priests: The Feminization of Catholicism and Priestly Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century Spain," *Gender & History* 33, no. 1 (2021): 94–110; P. Salomón Chéliz, "Beatas sojuzgadas por el clero. La imagen de las mujeres en el discurso anticlerical en la España del primer tercio del siglo XX," *Feminismo/s* 2 (2003): 41–58; F. Vázquez García, "La campaña contra los sacerdotes pederastas (1880–1912): un ejemplo de 'pánico moral' en la España de la Restauración," *Hispania* 78, no. 260 (2018): 759–86.

16. Interesting contributions around the causes and the spread of the religious crisis in the 1960s in C. C. Brown. "What was the Religious Crisis of the 1960s?" *Journal of Religious History* 34, no. 4 (2010): 468–79 and H. McLeod, "The Present Crisis in Historical Context," in *The Transformation of Christian Churches in Western Europe*, ed. L. Kenis, J. Billiet, and P. Pasture (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010), 23–38. In the case of Spain, there has been talk of a second wave of secularisation, no longer characterised by confrontation, but by the rise of indifference: see A. Pérez-Agote, *Cambio religioso en España: los avatares de la secularización* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2012).

17. H. McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). A transnational analysis of the impact of the conciliar doctrine can be found in G. R. Horn, *The Spirit of Vatican II: Western European Progressive Catholicism in the Long Sixties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Insists on the similarities of the Spanish case with the Western context, despite the political differences: A. Cazorla-Sánchez, "A Different Path? National Catholicism, Laicization and Dechristianization in Spain, 1939–1975," in *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization in North America and Western Europe, 1945–2000*, ed. N. Christie and M. Grauveau (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 351–66.

Catholics, but also of the clergy. A crisis around the figure of the traditional priest resulted from his relationship with the modern world, the rise of the laity, celibacy, or the principle of hierarchy in the church.[18] In Spain, in addition, the controversy over the support or criticism of Franco dictatorship by the clergy has to be added.[19] This crisis of the priest, however, has not been explored as a struggle between different models and forms of being a man.

In this sense, this article is based on the notion of the instability of masculinity, because despite the appeals to essential elements of male identity in traditional discourses, the representation of gender is a historical construction that undergoes constant changes. It has been pointed out that the different episodes of crisis around the concept of masculinity do not mean the disappearance of an identity but rather the perception of change and the need for reformulation.[20] The developments mentioned above removed the foundations of the Catholic masculine ideal. In some cases, this ideal was redefined in a more egalitarian sense, while in others it was reconsidered through the reaffirmation of a virile model of ancient overtones that sought to recompose the traditional gender order. Paradoxes continued to exist in both cases.

Hegemonic masculinity is defined in confrontation with such groups as "other" men who were considered less masculine, but also with women or children.[21] As I will try to demonstrate, first, in relation to the former, the progressive sectors of Spanish Catholicism highlighted the virile ideal of the independent and committed priest, as opposed to a clergyman subjected to the hierarchy and sheltered in the sacristy. At the same time, those who defended a return to the traditional figure of the clergyman insisted on elements such as the capacity for sacrifice in the face of the temptations of the modern world, as opposed to a weak priest who was not capable of maintaining his chastity.

Second, the incorporation of women into new workspaces, secularisation, sexual liberation, and feminism contributed to blurring the boundaries between masculine and feminine identities.[22] As Catholic women incorporated new registers, Catholics in general and priests in particular felt challenged, although not significantly because women continued to be barred from priesthood. Third and last, a mature piety was contrasted against infantilisation, and a relationship of dialogue with the bishop (who

18. M. Sevegrand, *Vers une église sans prêtres. La crise du clergé séculier en France (1945–1978)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004); D. Pelletier, *La crise catholique. Religion, société, politique* (Paris: Payot, 2002), 49–68.
19. F. Montero, *La Iglesia, de la colaboración a la disidencia (1956–1975)* (Madrid: Encuentro, 2009).
20. N. Aresti, *Masculinidades en tela de juicio* (Madrid: Feminismos-Cátedra, 2010), 297.
21. R. W. Connell: "La organización social de la masculinidad," in *¿Todos los hombres sois iguales? Identidades masculinas y cambios sociales*, ed. C. Lomas (Barcelona: Paidós, 2003), 31–54.
22. Brown explains that the 1960s marked a milestone in Christian culture, due to the impact of the sexual revolution on women, which disrupted the gender images assigned to the religious world. C. G. Brown, "Sex, Religion, and the Single Woman c. 1950–75: The Importance of a 'Short' Sexual Revolution to the English Religious Crisis of the Sixties," *Twentieth Century British History* 22, no. 2 (2011): 189–215.

represented the father figure) and with the church (which symbolised the mother figure) was proposed by conciliar groups. Conservative sectors, however, continued to interpret the priest as the father of the parish community.

In this text, I focus on masculinity based on a conception of gender as a relational category.[23] In this sense, Aresti insists on the importance of studying masculinities to know the experience not only of men, but also of women.[24] Consequently, it is not a matter of considering the experience of priests as the most relevant or the only one possible, but rather of placing it in a context of profound changes in a Catholicism led by both men and women. The fact that the church continued to be a structure controlled by men cannot be ignored, but the question needs to be posed: what kind of men?

From Martyr to Committed Priest

When the Civil War broke out in 1936, in Franco's territory the Catholic masculine ideal was inspired by the figure of the warrior monk, who adorned himself with virtues such as discipline, courage, honour or sacrifice in defence of the homeland and religion. The war was presented in the Catholic discourse as a crusade in such manner that religion became a matter for men, and some traits traditionally assigned to femininity such as piety or obedience acquired a masculine meaning.[25] At the same time, bishops like Pla y Deniel and Gomá alluded in their pastorals to the virility of the combatants of the crusade in contrast to the moral disorder of the previous democratic stage, so that the war became a sort of regeneration of masculinity.[26] On the other hand, according to Vincent, while the martyrdom of the soldiers was linked to courage in battle, that of the priests was identified with the passive martyrdom of the first Christians, based on dignity and courage in the face of death.[27] In Republican territory, the anti-clerical violence that took the lives of more than 6,800 clergymen sometimes included ritual abuse with mutilations and humiliations of a sexual nature, a circumstance related to the virile culture that reaffirmed the manhood of the attackers versus the alleged ambiguity of the priests, while pointing to the weight of an anticlericalism obsessed with priests' sexuality; additionally, the myth of the armed priest who fired from the bell towers was also spread.[28]

[23]. In the context of works that offer criticism of studies on the masculinisation and feminisation of religion, such as M.-L. Keinänen, "Feminist Reflections on the Study of the Feminization and Masculinization of Religion," in *Contemporary Encounters in Gender and Religion*, ed. L. Gemzöe, M.-L. Keinänen, and A. Maddrell (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 55–75.

[24]. N. Aresti, "La historia de las masculinidades, la otra cara de la historia de género," *Ayer* 117 (2020): 334–35.

[25]. N. Aresti, "The Battle to Define Spanish Manhood," in *Memory and Cultural History of Spanish Civil War. Realms of Oblivion*, ed. A. G. Morcillo (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 147–76.

[26]. M. Vincent, "The Martyrs and the Saints: Masculinity and the Construction of the Francoist Crusade," *History Workshop Journal* 47 (1999): 72–73.

[27]. Vincent, "The Martyrs and the Saints," 91–93.

[28]. J. de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (1998): 355–69; M. Delgado, *La ira sagrada. Anticlericalismo, iconoclastia y antirritualismo en la España contemporánea* (Barcelona: RBA, 2012).

In the post-war period, Franco's triumph gave rise to a victorious church, which was impregnated with political significance. As in other Catholic countries, a "Crusade of Christianity" that sought to re-Christianise society in the 1940s must be interpreted from a gender perspective. In that sense, post-war religious triumphalism reinforced a "demonstrative Catholic masculinity."[29] At the same time that women were called upon to participate in said re-Christianisation project, the Catholic discourse established a clear separation of roles between women and men, and above all insisted on the centralism of men who, on occasions, as happened with the male section of Catholic Action, had to take part in the programme through a remasculinisation of religion.[30] At the head of this project was the clergy. While the priests stood as the key to the spiritual reconquest of the country, the seminarians were educated in the triumphant spirit of national-Catholicism, at a time when religious vocations increased exponentially. This national-Catholic priest projected an image of a man with authority, a guide to the community and a hero of chastity, while qualities such as sacrifice and obedience were dressed in tones of war and martyrdom.[31]

During the 1950s, fascist greetings, the memory of martyrdom, and victorious language were disappearing, and interest in social action spread, but it seems undeniable that the influence and moral control of the priests in daily life remained fundamental.[32] Towards 1960, the priest could appear related to activities carried out mainly by women, such as charity and social action, and the use of the cassock could lead to a perceived unmanly appearance; however, he also embodied hierarchy and power, which reinforced his masculine features.

Starting in the 1960s, the irruption of the new postulates of the Second Vatican Council introduced numerous developments in Spanish Catholicism, making it more plural and diverse. They sustained, as theologian José M. Castillo indicates, a new culture that called into question the values and institutions of the past, and even the symbols and language to which the church was linked.[33] The ideal of a committed Catholic who exhibited great independence of judgement and was open to collaboration with non-believers was promoted.

[29]. T. van Osselaer and A. Maurits, "Heroic Men and Christian Ideals," in Werner, *Christian Masculinity*, 63–94.

[30]. I. Blasco: "Género y nación durante el franquismo," in *Imaginarios y representaciones sobre España durante el franquismo*, ed. S. Michonneau and X. M. Núñez Seixas (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2014), 49–71; M. Moreno Seco, "Masculinidades y religión. Los Hombres de Acción Católica en el franquismo," in Blasco, *Mujeres, hombres y catolicismo*, 137–61.

[31]. In keeping with the postwar ideal of masculinity, imbued with religious and military values, as noted by M. Nash, "Towards a New Moral Order: National-Catholicism, Culture and Gender," in *Spanish History since 1808*, ed. J. Alvarez Junco and A. Shubert (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 293–315.

[32]. C. Hernández Burgos, "'Y España se hizo templo': el triunfo de la cultura política nacional-católica (1945–1957)," in *Claves del mundo contemporáneo. Debate e investigación. Actas del XI Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea*, ed. T. M. Ortega and M. Á. del Arco (Granada: Comares, 2013).

[33]. J. M. Castillo, *¿Hacia dónde va el clero? Cinco cuestiones candentes* (Madrid: PPC, 1971), 10.

But not all the Spanish clergy identified with conciliar positions, so tensions emerged between different cultures and religious tendencies.[34] I follow here the classification established by Carmona Fernández, therefore differentiating between a minority that knew in depth and supported the changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council, the majority that formally accepted but applied them in a limited way, and finally another minority that rejected them.[35] In the first place, a sector of the clergy, interested in current affairs, joined the union and political mobilisation in such a way that it became a prominent element of political delegitimisation of the dictatorship. This oppositional clergy assumed the conciliar proposals of collegiality and dialogue, but also endorsed others of the working-class and progressive culture such as the sacrifice that commitment entails, rebellion against the authorities and even anti-clericalism in the face of an ecclesiastical structure that was perceived as rigid and attached to power. In addition, it supported a wider role for women and considered sexuality as a natural element of life, although with clear limitations.[36]

Second, a good part of the episcopate and the clergy held an official and tempered interpretation of the conciliar doctrine. As an example, in 1969 the Episcopal Commission for the Clergy claimed to understand the legitimate desires of priestly testimony and dialogue with the bishops, but at the same time it recalled the dangers of the fascination for the novelties and of rebellion against the structure of the church, along with the incomprehension of some of them regarding the Second Vatican Council.[37] The last option represented the fundamentalist sector, articulated around associations such as the *Hermandad Sacerdotal de San Antonio María Claret y Beato Juan de Ávila* (Priestly Brotherhood of San Antonio María Claret and Blessed Juan de Ávila), close to the Franco dictatorship. Some bishops also participated in it, such as Casimiro Morcillo, president of the Episcopal Conference between 1969 and 1971, or José Guerra Campos, its secretary from 1964 to 1972. This group appealed to the virile traits of the priest such as hierarchy, spirituality, and chastity, with a discourse that in a certain way reproduced that of the 1940s.

[34]. F. Montero, "La Iglesia dividida. Tensiones intraeclesiales en el segundo franquismo (La crisis posconciliar en el contexto del tardofranquismo)," in *De la cruzada al desenganche: la Iglesia entre el franquismo y la transición*, ed. M. Ortiz Heras and D. A. González (Madrid: Sílex, 2011), 51–75.

[35]. F. J. Carmona Fernández, "El clero secular y su formación en la España contemporánea: revisión historiográfica," in *La historia religiosa de la España contemporánea: Balance y perspectivas*, ed. F. Montero, J. de la Cueva, and J. Louzao (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, 2017), 162.

[36]. T. Groves et al., *Social Movements and the Spanish Transition: Building Citizenship in Parishes, Neighbourhoods, Schools and the Countryside* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 27–32. A transnational view of rebellious Catholicism, showing that the Spanish experience shared many features with that of democratic countries such as France or Italy can be found in P. Apor, R. Clifford, and N. Townson, "Faith," in *Europe's 1968. Voices of Revolt*, ed. R. Gildea, J. Mark, and A. Warring (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 211–38.

[37]. "Pero, ¿qué les pasa a los curas?," *Vida Nueva*, 11 January 1969.

The internal tensions in the clergy, the transformations of a society in the process of modernisation (industry and tourist development) and secularisation, and the innovations introduced by the Second Vatican Council raised doubts about the figure of the priest and gave way to emotional states such as "tensions, complexes, crisis of disappointment, fatigue, failure, loneliness, hopelessness."[38] The realisation of this situation gave rise to a public debate on the crisis of the priest in Catholic circles and even in the press.[39] In this text I affirm that this debate, which had a clear religious and political scope, can also be understood as a tension between different ideals of priestly masculinity. More than a masculinisation of the clergy, a conclusion that Raison reaches from the French experience of worker priests and those linked to secular movements,[40] my research indicates that in Spain there was a confrontation between old male models and the new ones, and that both exhibited contradictory features.

Between 1969 and 1970 a relevant clergy survey was carried out, which shows us the opinions of many Spanish priests. In it, the clergymen highlighted some virtues of the priest: most were linked to his traditional image, in which characteristics attributed to masculinity (self-control, dedication) and religious life (humility, charity) were combined, although others that aimed for a new clerical model were emphasised, such as dialogue, which appealed to autonomy and independence. The survey also reveals that only 20.7% opted for the cassock as the priest's clothing, while 16.3% preferred the clergyman, and 18.6% the secular dress.[41] This abandonment of traditional clothes can be interpreted as a desire to integrate into modern society, although it may have also contributed to showing a masculine image of the clergy, symbolised by the trousers. On the other hand, as the theologian Enrique Miret Magdalena pointed out, at a time when the distances between the clergy and society were shortened, the condition of priest was in contradiction with some habits typical of masculinity, a fact that created personal conflicts "if they could not attend a public act — theater, cinema, bullfighting or football —; if even smoking or going to a tavern or bar was forbidden to them; if their suit was a feminine cut habit — with skirts — to unconsciously emphasize their separation from the normal male" or if they were prohibited from having beards.[42]

The debate on how the ideal of the priest should be defined, in which representatives from the official, oppositional, and fundamentalist sectors of the

38. T. Cabestrero, *¿Qué les pasa a nuestros curas?* (Madrid: PPC, 1970), 51.
39. D. F. Álvarez Espinosa, *Cristianos y marxistas contra Franco* (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 2003), 217–62 and M. Moreno Seco, "El clero ante los cambios sociales y culturales de los años 60," in *Eppure si muove. La percepción de los cambios en España (1959–1976)*, ed. G. Sánchez Recio (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2008), 145–67.
40. Y. Raison du Cleuziou, "Devenir homme parmi les hommes. Révolution ascétique et redéfinition de la virilité sacerdotale au milieu du XXe siècle," in Bréjon Bréjon de Lavergnée & Della Sudda, *Genre et Christianisme*, 257–85.
41. The survey collected the opinion of 85% of the Spanish secular clergy. It can be found in *Guía de la Iglesia en España. 1973* (Madrid: Oficina de Sociología y Estadística de la Iglesia, 1974), 84–106.
42. E. Miret Magdalena, "Las extrañas obligaciones del clero," *Triunfo*, 10 June 1967.

clergy participated, arose around four characteristics that also outlined normative masculinity in the 1960s and the early 1970s: independence, authority, work, and sexual and family life. These elements, as we will see, were combined in different ways with other features associated with a priest: humility, obedience, sacrifice, piety.

An Independent Man?

In an institution founded on hierarchy and obedience to authority, the doctrine of collegiality introduced by the Second Vatican Council encouraged opinions in favour of a priest with initiative and judgement. Using a recurring simile at the time, if the church was the mother and the priests her children, they demanded access to the age of majority. The image of the priest thus reinforced some male profiles, compared to the previous representation of clerics submissive to the episcopate and unable to make decisions for themselves, which brought them closer to dependent beings such as children. From the magazine *Vida Nueva* (New Life), it was stated that in order to avoid "infantilizing the clergy," the obedience of the priest "cannot be interpreted as a total and absolute transfer of his person and his time in the hands of authority," so a sector claimed to act autonomously and to be able to exercise criticism on ecclesial matters.[43] In various dioceses, groups of priests demanded to be heard by their bishops because of the maturity of their convictions.[44]

Additionally, there was a generalised demand among wide sectors of the clergy for independence from the economic powers and Franco dictatorship, in contrast to the previous national-Catholicism. The Jesuit Ignacio Ellacuría affirmed that the religious vocation demanded a mature and adult obedience and was in favour of rethinking the ways of acting of the Society of Jesus: "Are not we, perhaps, preaching Christianity through power, prestige and wealth?"[45] The rebellious clergy, who embodied these demands, were clothed in an epic of struggle and sacrifice. By way of example, in 1969 six priests went on a hunger strike in Barcelona demanding a clear position from the hierarchy regarding the human rights situation in the country and church–state relations; in a letter they declared that their fidelity to the poorest meant service to the truth, "with strength to pronounce it before anyone, with humility to feel like simple servants of the community."[46] One of them was Lluis Maria Xirinacs, critical of Francoism and imprisoned on several occasions, who was a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize: "His concept of Christianity leads him to fight, in a non-violent way, for the achievement of a more just, democratic and socialist society. This has cost him beatings, arrests and imprisonment."[47]

43. "Pero, ¿qué les pasa a los curas?," *Vida Nueva*, 11 January 1969.
44. As can be seen in the letter included in *Pastoral Misionera*, July–August 1971.
45. I. Ellacuría, "La juventud religiosa actual," *Hechos y Dichos*, February 1967.
46. *Vida Nueva*, 21 June 1969.
47. M. Vázquez Montalbán, "Lluis M. Xirinacs, el cura del hambre," *Triunfo*, 8 February 1975.

In December 1969, faced with these positions, the Episcopal Conference approved the document titled "The priestly ministry today," in which it was stated that the priest was not "autonomous administrator of a priesthood" but rather a servant of Christ. The Conference accepted the dialogue between priests and bishops but insisted that the ultimate decision rested with the hierarchy. The text ended with an appeal to priests, who were called "brothers and friends" (not sons), to trust their bishops.[48] In religious orders, in the face of those who claimed a non-authoritarian relationship with the superior, some voices criticised that the sense of obedience and the authentic supernatural spirit had been lost.[49] Taking a step further, there were those who insisted that the priest should be a "man of the Church: clergyman, hierarchical."[50]

The tensions between the hierarchy and a sector of the clergy became evident in the Joint Assembly of Bishops and Priests, held in Madrid in 1971, where a wide range of questions were raised about the situation of the church and the clergy.[51] To prepare it, the aforementioned clergy survey was conducted between 1969 and 1970. The answers reveal that a good part of the priests maintained a critical attitude towards the episcopate and a desire for independence in the face of the dictatorship: 66.5% did not agree with the use made by the hierarchy of authority and 61.6% rejected the official position of the church on social and political aspects, while 58.1% believed that the protest actions were a pastoral and Christian requirement of the priest.[52] The debates within the joint Assembly aroused great interest, but the adopted conclusions continued to insist on the importance of hierarchy, even though it was admitted that "the obedience of the Priest must be active, responsible and free of spirit, without adulation or servility."[53] In Gerardo Fernández's opinion, the Assembly did not alter the hierarchical order or the ecclesial structure, nor did it allow a renewal based on pluralism or dialogue.[54] Many of the expectations that the progressive clergy had placed in this Assembly were frustrated.

A Man with Authority?

In contrast to the image of a chosen being who acted as spiritual father of the religious community and whose prerogatives were unquestioned, the priest was challenged by a society in the process of secularisation and by a

[48]. In J. Iribarren, *Documentos colectivos del episcopado español, 1870–1974* (Madrid: BAC, 1974), 442–55.
[49]. J. Iturrioz, "Treinta años de vida de la Compañía de Jesús en España," *Hechos y Dichos*, April 1970.
[50]. M. Bonet in J. Sans Vila (ed.), *¿Cómo ve usted al sacerdote? ¿Qué espera de él?* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1964) (3rd ed.), 66.
[51]. F. Montero García, J. Louzao Villar, and F. J. Carmona Fernández (coords.), *La Asamblea Conjunta de Obispos y Sacerdotes de 1971: estudios diocesanos* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2018).
[52]. In *Guía de la Iglesia en España. 1973*, 85–86.
[53]. *Vida Nueva*, 25 September and 2 October 1971.
[54]. G. Fernández Fernández, *Religión y poder: transición en la Iglesia española* (León: Edilesa, 1999), 165–66.

doctrine that encouraged the laity to participate in the liturgy and to intervene on theological issues.[55] These transformations led to a loss of prominence for the priest, whose figure had also lost the elements that distinguished him from his community.[56] In the words of the nun Begoña de Isusi, "his figure no longer enjoys, by virtue of the priesthood, the prestige before men that he enjoyed in traditional society," because "today he has to share [it] in a co-responsibility with the laity and other levels of the People of God and has to do this in the face of a very strong critical super-sensitivity that exists among those inside and outside the Church."[57]

This situation gave rise to two opposite responses: bewilderment and insecurity in front of these developments on the one hand, or the effort to maintain traditional authority or obtain a new authority based on social commitment, on the other. Lack of security and doubts about the leadership itself undermined the masculine image of the priest. According to the previously mentioned clergy survey, many clergy acknowledged feeling ill-prepared to guide their parishioners in economic and social (72.5%) and political (75.4%) issues.[58] As Ramón Echarren, auxiliary bishop of Madrid-Alcalá stated: "there is no social unanimity in what refers to what men want and expect from the priest; this makes the priest live today in permanent perplexity in relation to what he must be and do."[59]

Meanwhile, a sector of the clergy demanded to recover the old authority of the priest. For Manuel Bonet, the priest had to dedicate himself mainly to the things of God, without neglecting the liturgy for activism.[60] The conservative Archbishop Casimiro Morcillo launched a harsh criticism against those who doubted or opted for social commitment, abundant among the clergy in his opinion, who should abandon the clergy if not fully devoted to the mission as he conceived it. Morcillo thus rejected those who in his opinion showed immaturity and absolute conformity as well as others who, in his words, wanted to enjoy the world without more restrictions than conventional morality.[61]

However, in those years the belief in a committed clergy was very widespread among those who understood that the priest should participate in the improvement of society in terms of justice and freedom, which in Spain meant fighting against the dictatorship. In the 1969–1970 clergy survey, 60.2% believed that they could be involved in the transformative tasks of Spanish society.[62] The new authority had to derive from integration into society and from the desire to be a testimony of the religious and not as a representative of a differentiated class or social establishment.[63] An example of

55. A. L. Marzal, "El sacerdocio, una conciencia en crisis," *Hechos y Dichos*, April 1968.
56. J. M. de Llanos in Sans Vila, ¿*Cómo ve usted al sacerdote?*, 202–7; F. Urbina, "El sentido sacerdotal en el mundo moderno," *Pastoral Misionera*, September–October 1967.
57. In Cabestrero, ¿*Qué les pasa a nuestros curas?*, 29–30.
58. In *Guía de la Iglesia en España. 1973*, 85.
59. In Cabestrero, ¿*Qué les pasa a nuestros curas?*, 49.
60. In Sans Vila, ¿*Cómo ve usted al sacerdote?*, 59–63.
61. In Cabestrero, ¿*Qué les pasa a nuestros curas?*, 44.
62. In *Guía de la Iglesia en España. 1973*, 86.
63. As noted by J. M. de Llanos, in Cabestrero, ¿*Qué les pasa a nuestros curas?*, 36.

these new approaches was the opening of parishes to secular and even non-religious movements, protecting and promoting cultural and social initiatives that were often anti-Franco. Mariano Gamo, for instance, organised assemblies in his parish where the meaning of May Day or the state of emergency in 1969 were discussed, which led to his arrest and imprisonment in the concordat prison of Zamora.[64] The sociologist José María Díaz Mozaz points out that these priests found substitutes for the loss of their social role at work or in "the creation of clubs, cooperatives, cinemas, etc., thus recovering leadership functions."[65]

The borders between the secular and the ecclesiastical were blurred, to the alarm of those who defended moderate positions. The nun Margarita Riber warned against "inferiority complexes, skepticisms, 'escapes' or, on the contrary, the temptation of a slavish mimicry of everything secular, as if this, 'ipso facto', meant a deep commitment with our world and its needs."[66] In a similar vein, Cardinal Vicente Enrique y Tarancón insisted a few years later that "a priest cannot be a myth, a distant, archangelic being, out of this world," but neither "a layman, he is not a social leader,"[67] even if he participated in social action and lived among the laity.

Along with the coming of age of the laity, a second approach that called into question the traditional authority of the priest focused on the demands to end the exclusion of women in the church. As a hierarchical structure in which power rested with men, the Catholic Church was affected by an interesting debate on the possibility of women accessing the diaconate or priestly ordination in a context in which they managed to have a greater presence in areas until then prohibited and in which second wave feminism was on the rise, although the answer was always negative from the Holy See. While the Dutch and Canadian churches supported the ordination of women, in Spain the Joint Assembly was divided on the need to study the issue.[68] In rare exceptions, the ordination of women was clearly defended, as the Jesuit José Mª Llanos did in 1975, but not from an egalitarian approach but rather through a discourse of difference, arguing that women priests would bring cordiality and affection to the ministry.[69]

Prominent female voices in the Spanish church, such as the leaders of Catholic Action Pilar Bellosillo and Mary Salas, did not consider this aspect a priority, although they asked for the distrust, hostility, and contempt that the clergy sometimes showed towards women to disappear.[70] Some nuns also challenged the paternalistic treatment given to them by the clergy and at

64. Interview to Mariano Gamo in Apor, Clifford & Townson, "Faith," 229.
65. J. M. Díaz Mozaz, "La comunidad y el ministerio de los presbíteros," *Iglesia Viva*, July–October 1970.
66. In Cabestrero, *¿Qué les pasa a nuestros curas?*, 32.
67. In a statement to José Luis Martín Descalzo, *Tarancón, el cardenal del cambio* (Planeta: Barcelona, 1982), 123.
68. E. Miret Magdalena, "El celibato del clero," *Triunfo*, 14-II-1970. *Vida Nueva*, 25 September 1971 and 2 October 1971.
69. J. M. de Llanos, "Las mujeres sacerdotes?," *Vida Nueva*, 1 November 1975.
70. M. Salas, "La mujer en las Iglesias," *Vida Nueva*, 4 January 1969.

times demanded same rights as the priests and freedom of action. In addition, they claimed greater autonomy from the male hierarchy, better training, and a more active participation in the life of the church. They wished to intervene in apostolic tasks with initiative and decision, in the face of the "prevailing male supremacy," which considered them minors.[71] All these critical analyses questioned the image of male power and authority that the clergy had projected until then, although they did not demolish it.

A Man Who Works?

Work also became a weighty element in the male representation of the new ideal of the priest. Those who chose to carry out a trade or a profession claimed the desire for autonomy from the Francoist state and even from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but also their aspiration to be "full men and appear as men among men, who are considered as such because they work." Affected by the common criticism "living like a priest" — that is, without working —, they wanted to overcome the inferiority complex they felt when faced with this type of opinion.[72] Manual work would allow, in the opinion of its defenders, a priesthood "free from social conditioning and with the only illusion of being able to identify his life with that of others, without demanding privileges."[73]

From moderate positions, the possibility of combining priestly ministry with work was frequently proposed, without forgetting that the former was the priority. Thus, the presbyteral council of Astorga understood that the manual work of the priests was possible and positive in many cases, provided that the priestly ministry and the spiritual life of the priest himself were safeguarded.[74] The most conservative sectors totally rejected the work of the priest, who had to dedicate himself exclusively to religious affairs.

Nonetheless, many clergymen, following the pioneering experience developed in post-war France, opted for paid work, which gave rise to the phenomenon of worker priests.[75] As workers independent of the state salary, without clothes to distinguish them from other workers, they approached the ideal of virility of the moment.[76] Participants in the masculinised working-class world of the 1960s and the early 1970s, they clothed themselves with qualities such as physical strength, endurance, solidarity among workers, courage, or leadership when they intervened in unions and political

71. M. T. Ruiz-Prados, "Nosotras … las monjas (?!)," *Hechos y Dichos*, May 1967. About these demands by women, see M. Moreno Seco, "Mujeres en la transición de la Iglesia a la democracia: avances y dificultades," *Historia del Presente* 10 (2007): 25–40.
72. "Pero, ¿qué les pasa a los curas?," *Vida Nueva*, 11 de enero de 1969.
73. A. Bocos, "El trabajo manual del clero," *Iglesia Viva*, July–October 1968.
74. *Vida Nueva*, 28 November 1970.
75. J. Pérez Pinillos, *Los curas obreros en España (1963–2003)* (Madrid: Nueva Utopía, 2004); F. J. Torres Barranco, "Una caracterización del sacerdocio en el trabajo: hacia una conceptualización del sacerdote obrero," *Revista de Historia Actual*, 16–17 (2019): 101–12. It was a transnational experience, as noted by Horn, *The Spirit of the Vatican II*, 61–109.
76. Muller and Favier, "Les Hommes catholiques."

struggles.[77] Thus, a bricklayer priest from Granada affirmed that, despite the physical effort, "the experience of fraternity, of deep solidarity, of sharing the sweat of work with your colleagues compensates enormously."[78] Several of them insisted that they renounced all paternalism and prominence: "My experience as a Christian and as a worker priest was not to go to the work to preach, or to convert anyone, but to work and, from there, live my faith and my life with coherence."[79] However, on many occasions they were the centre of attention when leading union mobilisations or being imprisoned; according to Ramiro Reig, the Jesuits distinguished themselves by showing a vanguard position of involvement in labour and political protests.[80] The worker priests represented the culmination of the anti-hierarchical ideas of radical Catholicism of the 1960s and 1970s.[81] They dedicated little time to prayer and spiritual life, but understood that "faith is made explicit in struggle."[82]

Whether they worked or not, another experience that many priests and religious put into practice was abandoning the parish houses or convents to live in suburbs and working-class neighbourhoods, with all their shortcomings and discomforts, like the Jesuits José Mª Llanos and José María Díez-Alegría in the marginal Pozo del Tío Raimundo in Madrid. In an interview, Llanos was humble before the poor, resistant to pressure and rebellious against social injustice.[83] They created small communities of priests or shared living spaces with laymen, in apartments where they shared their meagre incomes, as well as their concerns and ideals. Other elements that allowed them to integrate into the working-class culture were their insistence on being called by their first names, their presence in bars or cafes and other daily leisure spaces, and even the adoption of a progressive dress style (trench coat, turtleneck jersey, beard).[84]

A Celibate Man?

A principle that shaped the normative masculinity of the time was an active heterosexual life. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the issue of clerical sexuality in Spain was limited to the debate regarding compulsory celibacy as a defining trait of the priest. Aspects that are currently controversial, such as the existence of homosexual priests or the sexual abuse of minors, were not mentioned. There were few allusions to homosexuality, limited to presenting

77. M. C. Muñoz Ruiz, "Género, masculinidad y nuevo movimiento obrero bajo el franquismo," in *Del hogar a la huelga. Trabajo, género y movimiento obrero durante el franquismo*, ed. J. Babiano (Madrid: Libros de la Catarata, 2007), 245–85.
78. *Triunfo*, May 31, 1975. Similar stories are included in *Pastoral Misionera*, May–June 1967 and May–June 1968, and in *Sal Terrae*, October 1966, and November 1966. See also L. Anoro, in *Curas obreros. Entre la Iglesia y el Reino. Evaluación, perspectivas* (Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, 1987), 12–19.
79. Salesian priest Demetrio Orte, in X. Corrales, *De la misa al tajo. La experiencia de los curas obreros* (Valencia: PUV, 2008), 161.
80. Cited by Corrales, *De la misa al tajo*, 56–57.
81. According to Apor, Clifford & Townson, "Faith," 232.
82. Ramiro Reig in Corrales, *De la misa al tajo*, 75.
83. *Vida Nueva*, 24 April 1971.
84. *Vida Nueva*, 24 April 1971.

it as a danger to be avoided; cases of abuse were met with thunderous silence. Therefore, although it is obvious that these realities existed at the time, they do not appear in the writings on the crisis of the clergy. In addition, we do not know the real scope of these situations, as there are no academic studies in this regard.[85]

Celibacy, as a necessary condition to exercise priesthood and considered until that time as a demonstration of the capacity for self-control, dedication to others, and sacrifice by the priest, became an issue of debate throughout the Catholic world.[86] With the Second Vatican Council, sexuality began to be interpreted as an element which enriched a human being, so the vision of sex as sin began to be abandoned. In addition, marriage became a highly valued option to achieve a full religious life[87]. In this context, a loud debate was opened on the obligatory nature of celibacy.

In June 1967, Paul VI published the encyclical *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, in which he flatly denied the possibility of introducing optional celibacy. The controversy was rekindled when in the early 1970s the Dutch church proposed abolishing mandatory celibacy and allowing the ordination of married men, a widespread demand among Catholics in Brazil, Germany, and France.[88] Soon after, the Pope accepted the possibility of granting ordination to married men in very special circumstances, a decision that encouraged the expectations of those who defended optional celibacy, although it was never accepted by the Vatican. Cardinal Daniélou, in that sense, concluded: "to adapt the Church to the modern world, yes. But to give in on this point, no. In these times when sexuality invades everything, the celibacy of priests is a 'testimony' which is more essential than ever."[89]

In Spain, the 1969–1970 clergy survey showed that Spanish priests were divided: 47.2% quite agreed or very much agreed with the proposal that celibacy was a free option and another 47.2% agreed little or did not at all agree; however, the responses that defended an absolute rejection to that free option represented 40% and the absolute yes 27.1%.[90] In general, few opinions

85. There were some cases of priests who were rumoured to be homosexual, such as Jesús Aguirre, a clergyman and intellectual, secularised in 1969 and married to the Duchess of Alba in 1978; an unauthorised biography in M. Vicent, *Jesús, el magnífico* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 2011). A few other cases of gay priests feature in a book by the journalist F. Olmeda, *El látigo y la pluma. Homosexuales en la España de Franco* (Madrid: Oberón, 2004), 149–56. On the lack of academic studies regarding the abuse of minors by the clergy, see G. Varona and A. Martínez, "Estudio exploratorio sobre los abusos sexuales en la Iglesia española y otros contextos institucionales: marco teórico y metodológico de una investigación victimológica abierta," *Eguzkilore* 29 (2015): 7–76.

86. It was an ongoing debate which had taken place previously, as explored by A. Berlis, "Celibate or Married Priests? Polemical Gender discourse in Nineteenth-Century Catholicism," in Pasture, Art, and Buerman, *Beyond the Feminization Thesis*, 56–71.

87. J. M. Burns, "Sexuality after the Council: Gay Catholics, Married Clergy, Rights, and Change in San Francisco, 1962–1987," in *Catholics in the Vatican II Era: Local Histories of a Global Event*, ed. K. S. Cummings, T. Matovina, and R. A. Orsi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 3–27.

88. E. Miret Magdalena, ¿Hacia una religión secularizada?," *Triunfo*, 30 January 1970.

89. Cited by E. Miret Magdalena, "¿Crisis de la Iglesia o crisis de celibato?," *Triunfo*, 21 February 1970.

90. In *Guía de la Iglesia en España. 1973*, 90.

questioned the validity of celibacy. Thus, José María Díez-Alegría explained that he lived in celibacy without frustration or rancour, to warn "that, if I am not mistaken, I am clearly heterosexual. And the opposite of a misogynist." In his opinion, it did not make sense to face chastity as a heroic attitude, but as a positive and joyful option even if it required self-control.[91]

However, many voices were raised demanding freedom of choice to suggest a diversity of ways of understanding priesthood which included celibate and other options, such as married clergy. Celibacy and marriage were presented as two equally acceptable options, because while virginity allowed absolute dedication, marriage made incarnation possible in earthly experiences.[92] In the opinion of Bernardino M. Hernando, the celibate priest was "a free man who chooses celibacy driven by the inner force of his dedication," so that freely chosen celibacy did not imply "a loss of human values or a deforming sexual defect."[93]

Among the arguments that were used in defence of optional celibacy, some directly alluded to values assigned to masculinity. In the first place, it would allow the priests to mature and avoid situations of imbalance that at times affected clerics who experienced celibacy as an imposition.[94] In this sense, a priest criticised the training received on celibacy, which made him "mentally retarded" in his vision of relationships with women, since he was only told to see women as a source of sin.[95] Secondly, it would make it possible to start a family if the clergyman so desired: "Isn't it more humane and more comforting for a priest who has spent a whole day in his ministry to come home to a wife and children who take care of him or comfort him and worry about his pastoral problems, than being alone at home?"[96] Thirdly, it was stated that maintaining a married relationship would allow priests to better understand men's lives. In September 1969, the magazine *Vida Nueva* published a letter from a secularized and married priest, M.T.B., who affirmed that the new human realities had made him "more man and a better Christian."[97] The last argument in favour of optional celibacy downplayed the importance of purity and criticised the double standard of a "masculinised" society which was at the same time promoting the emancipation of women and the demand for responsible fatherhood.[98] Underlying such developments there was a masculinity which was less opposed to the ideal of woman as a possible partner. In this sense, the controversy over the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968), which prohibited artificial contraceptive methods, cannot be

91. J. M. Díez-Alegría, *¡Yo creo en la esperanza!* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brower, 1972), 165–66.
92. A. Hortelano and M. L. Algini, *Celibato, interrogante abierto* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1971), 143–45.
93. B. M. Hernando, *Celibato: cuestión urgente* (Madrid: PPC, 1970), 6, 32.
94. E. Miret Magdalena, "El celibato, nuevamente," *Triunfo*, 5 December 1970.
95. Letter to the editor, *Vida Nueva*, 10 January 1970.
96. Another letter to the editor in *Vida Nueva*, 10 January 1970.
97. *Vida Nueva*, 13 September 1969. Another testimony by a priest secularised in 1973 and married: "For me, as a person and as a priest, marriage has given me many fundamental things to enable me to grow as a human being," cited by P. Rodríguez, *La vida sexual del clero* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1995), 43.
98. F. Cebolla, *Celibato, última hora: ¿los curas se casan?* (Madrid: Alameda, 1969), 215–16.

forgotten. In Spain this prohibition caused great disappointment in the progressive Catholic community and profoundly discredited the Spanish church.[99]

In the opinion of Enrique Miret Magdalena, who based his arguments on a concept of religion in which love was a central element, there were two types of celibates. On the one hand, "the caricature of the bachelor that we usually know is precisely the exaggerated expression of the type of negative celibate," selfish, without capacity for love. On the other hand, positive celibates are those who dedicate themselves to the service to others, who live celibacy with serenity and prefer the love of many through service.[100] Fermín Cebolla established the same distinction but reaffirming normative elements of masculinity: negative celibates were represented by figures such as the bachelor, Don Juan or the homosexual, and were branded apathetic, dirty, "seekers of clandestine compensation," mannered, childish: "In love with the endless feminine confessions, inveterate chatters of nuns." By contrast, the positive celibate who had chosen this condition lived his single life "with a strong, virile, joyful, creative dignity."[101]

From fundamentalist sectors, but also from the official church, the obligatory nature of celibacy was defended on the grounds that it was a sign of belonging to a community of the elected; thus, the Association of San Antonio María Claret believed that celibacy "is possible and easy for those who have divine grace."[102] It also reflected the capacity for absolute dedication of the priest, who had chosen to commit himself to God, as an option for life.[103] Celibacy also made it possible to turn the priest into a reference for his community, in the opinion of the Spanish bishops, who recalled the obligatory nature of celibacy in December 1969.[104] Lastly, it was important that the priest demonstrated his capacity for sacrifice and his self-control, overcoming passions and avoiding falling into temptation,[105] in a context "full of sexual alterations," according to Olegario González de Cardenal.[106]

99. M. García Fernández, "Sexualidad y religión en el tardofranquismo. La recepción de la *Humanae Vitae* en España y la crisis de autoridad de la Iglesia," *Hispania Nova* 19 (2021): 255–90; A. Ignaciuk and T. Ortiz Gómez, *Anticoncepción, mujeres y género. La 'píldora'. En España y Polonia (1960–1980)* (Madrid: La Catarata, 2016). In Germany, it was the rejection of *Humanae Vitae* which was fundamental to the questioning of priestly celibacy (K. A. Tichenor, *Religious Crisis and Civic Transformation: How Conflicts over Gender and Sexuality changed the West German Catholic Church* (Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2016), 46–55). Unlike those two countries, in the USA the debate on celibacy was linked to scandals over child abuse (J. C. Seitz, "Priests as Persons: An Emotional History of St. John's Seminary, Boston, in the Era of the Council," in *Catholics in the Vatican II Era*, ed. K. S. Cummings, T. Matovina, and R. A. Orsi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 28–50).
100. E. Miret Magdalena, "Mito y celibato," *Triunfo*, 26 August 1967.
101. Cebolla, *Celibato, última hora*, 144–48.
102. *Vida Nueva*, 24 May 1969.
103. J. L. Larrabe, *La vocación religiosa y el celibato sacerdotal* (Madrid: Larrabe Editions, 1970).
104. "El ministerio sacerdotal hoy," in Iribarren, *Documentos colectivos*, 451–53.
105. Letters to the editor in *Vida Nueva*, 10 January 1970.
106. O. González de Cardenal, "Sacerdocio y celibato," *Iglesia Viva*, July–October 1970.

Conclusions

In 1960s and the early 1970s, a new type of clerical masculinity developed in Spain, not centered on the combative character of the expression of piety or obedience, as in the previous two decades, but on responsibility and maturity. A reformulation of masculinity in more secular terms is delineated. The concern of the official church was not oriented towards reinforcing the masculine image of religion, of Catholics and of priests, but rather towards maintaining a difficult balance between tradition (hierarchy, celibacy, exclusion of women from the priesthood) and innovation (dialogue, participation of laity). This model was, however, questioned by other sectors of Catholicism, both by those who wanted to delve into the more egalitarian and committed traits of the priest, but at the same time reaffirmed qualities of worker masculinity, and by those closer to fundamentalist positions, who demanded a return to spirituality and a clergy linked to power. These represented, then, different combinations of masculine and Christian (sometimes considered to be feminine) traits to define the ideal of a priest, an ideal which also reflected the plurality of models of masculinity present in the heterogeneous Spanish Catholicism of the period studied.

The tensions, doubts, and controversies analysed caused a crisis regarding the figure of the priest, which therefore implied a reconfiguration of his male image. This crisis had a direct impact on the decline in vocations in the seminaries. Asked about the causes of this phenomenon, the seminarians pointed to factors such as celibacy, loneliness, and the belief that "priests do not fully realize themselves as men in the psychological, emotional, and work aspects."[107] Independence, work, and sexuality again emerged as essential factors in the masculine identity of the priest.

Along with these changes in the seminaries, the Spanish church was greatly affected by a growing process of abandonment of the religious state. Although this had begun in the 1960s, its highest incidence occurred in the following decade: between 1975 and 1977, 845 priests were laicised.[108] Abandoning the priestly state was frequently difficult, as a result of personal doubts, problems in finding livelihoods, social rejection, and obstacles posed by the hierarchy. In 1973, canon Enrique Soriano asked to be laicised, sending a letter to the bishop of Orihuela-Alicante in which he alluded to the "bitter" experience of criticism and condemnation received, but also to his own determination:

> I am aware of the security that I am abandoning. I sense the risks hidden in all this. I foresee the great difficulties involved in starting a new kind of life at 46 when you have not been humanly prepared. Furthermore, I know what it is to have a personality protected and clothed by the institution. To be someone in society because

[107]. Survey carried out in 46 seminaries during the year 1968–1969, in *Guía de la Iglesia en España. 1973*, 107–11.

[108]. *Guía de la Iglesia en España. 1979* (Madrid: Oficina de Estadística y Sociología de la Iglesia, 1979), 152. In some dioceses the secularisation of priests reached 20% of the secular clergy, as in Cartagena (J. L. García Hernández, "La secularización de los sacerdotes," *Cuadernos del Estero* 16 (2001): 263–82).

it has been given to you, to be trained to be an authority and to suddenly find yourself with nothing.[109]

Another Canon from Alicante, Carlos Alonso, laicised in 1975, recounts his personal difficulties ("I felt very guilty"), but also the support of lay people with whom he had previously worked.[110]

The request to resign from the priestly state was interpreted in very different ways. While some voices accused the laicised priests of not having had "the courage to be faithful to Christ," others insisted that "to be laicized is not cowardice; it is to demonstrate suicidal courage."[111] There were widespread accusations that the decision was due to attraction to women, that is, due to a lack of self-restraint and firmness in the face of passion, which questioned the moral strength, or virility, of these ex-clerics. They frequently dismissed such accusations, insisting on other reasons such as confrontations with the hierarchy and their difficulty identifying with the official church, thereby showing a masculine image of decisiveness and independence.[112] For example, as priest Jaime Riquelme put it: "you are freeing yourself from everything that at one time you perceived as normal" in the field of obedience, lack of access to culture or moral control, and he reached the following conclusion: "I no longer have anything to do with this Church, I am leaving."[113] In addition, a minority of clergymen married and continued to exercise the priesthood, such as Julio Pérez Pinillos, who in 1978 founded the *Movimiento por el Celibato Opcional* (Movement for Optional Celibacy), offering an alternative model of priestly masculinity.

These reconsiderations and controversies came to an end in the1980s, during the papacy of John Paul II, with the clear refusal of the ordination of women and the reaffirmation of the compulsory nature of celibacy, by which the Holy See reinforced the masculine and exceptional image of the clergy, giving rise to what Tichenor calls a "gendered Church."[114] This return of religion to the public sphere and to conservative positions probably influenced the male image of the Spanish clergy, a field open for future research.

Data Availability Statement

Data openly available in a public repository that issues datasets with DOIs.

[109]. Letter from Enrique Soriano to Pablo Barrachina, 1 July 1973 (Enrique Soriano personal archive). In the same sense it is expressed in the interview carried out in Torremanzanas, 7 February 1995 (Archive of Democracy, University of Alicante).
[110]. Interview with Carlos Alonso Monreal, Murcia, 29 March 1995 (Archive of Democracy, University of Alicante).
[111]. Letters to the editor in *Vida Nueva*, 10 January 1970.
[112]. Testimonies can be founded in M. Prados Rodríguez, J. Mejía Mejía, and J. M. Fuentes, *Los curas casados se confiesan* (Madrid: Sedmay, 1977) and in Á. de Castro and M. Serrano, *La gran desbandada (curas secularizados)* (Madrid Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1977).
[113]. Interview with Jaime Riquelme, Alicante, 11 November 1994 (Archive of Democracy, University of Alicante).
[114]. Tichenor, *Religious Crisis*, 9.